

BRIAN LEE WILL NOT TAKE OVER

WYCOMBE Wanderers will announce on Monday the name of the successor to John Reardon who was dismissed as team manager last week after a meeting between him and club officials.

When the news of Reardon's departure broke, there was immediate speculation that former manager Brian Lee would take up the reins again after a two year break.

But I now understand that Mr Lee is not in the running for one of the most envied managerial posts in non-league football. As a vice-chairman of the club, he would surely have been in a position to take the job if he wanted it. But it has now become clear that the job will be going to somebody else.

WILLIAMS TIPPED

Inevitably, numerous

Story by MICHAEL KNOX

names have been bandied about in the event of no official announcement. They include former Wycombe player Keith Blunt, now boss at Sutton and Andy Williams of Hitchin who is probably favourite to take over.

Another name mentioned is that of the Hungerford boss Jimmy Kelman.

One thing is certain, whoever does eventually take over will be in a very hot seat indeed. He will be very aware Mr Reardon was dismissed after the team had finished third in the Rothmans Isthmian League Premier Division as well as winning the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup.

In any other club but Wycombe, Mr Reardon's departure would come as a mighty shock. However, they have set themselves such high standards over the past decade, that there

were rumblings throughout the latter stages of last season about the side's inability to score goals.

The trouble was that the Blues never replaced Ian Pearson who left before the start of last season to enjoy some success with Millwall. His replacement Derek Harris, could not match up to him, and it was left to the perennial Tony Horseman to head the goalscoring charts yet again.

The ironic thing about Mr Reardon's departure is the timing. In the week before he heard he was not to be re-engaged, he was in the process of signing Chesham's promising young striker Stewart Atkins.

ATKINS SIGNED

Indeed, Mr Reardon completed the formalities for this signing last Friday with the full consent of Wycombe — three days after he had lost his job.

Mr Reardon commented this week: "I wish the club continued

success and I hope the deal I clinched with Stewart Atkins and the earlier signing of Steve Hardwick means that I'm leaving the club in a stronger position than when I had been manager."

He was first appointed manager midway through the 1976/77 season following the sacking of Ted Powell, who was asked to quit after applying for a coaching job abroad, which he eventually obtained.

Mr Reardon was appointed caretaker manager until the end of the season, but the team performed so well under his leadership — they only just missed out on the league title — that when the time came to appoint a full-time boss for last season, he was the obvious choice.

Club chairman Mr Reg Williams pointed out this week that Mr Reardon had not been sacked — purely that his one season's contract had run out and he was not to be re-engaged.

In a prepared statement Mr Williams said: "After careful consideration, the decision has been taken by the officers and committee of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club not to re-engage Mr Reardon as manager for a further season.

"On behalf of the club may I express our thanks for his efforts made on our behalf and the sincerity with which he carried out all of his duties."

Two coaches have served under John Reardon this season. Laurie Churchill left in mid-season while the second Brian Hall was recently appointed manager of Walton and Hersham.

To replace him I understand Wycombe approached F.A. staff coach Tommy Tranter, who opted instead to join Joe Arpino at Slough Town. So for the meantime Blues are without both a manager and a coach — a situation that will be remedied next week.

Mr Reardon, 46, joined Wycombe as assistant to Brian Lee in 1969, eighteen months after taking Chesham United to the F.A. Amateur Cup final at Wembley, where they lost 1-0 to Leytonstone.